

# Christian Chronicles

YOUR DEFINITIVE CHRISTIAN UNDERGROUND DAILY NEWS



*Ancient Reuters Picture  
Polycarp was burnt for his faith*

## Last Minute Change Deprived Wild Beasts of a Meal

### Polycarp of Smyrna

(AD 69-155)

Sentenced to be killed by wild beasts in the arena, Bishop Polycarp of Smyrna was instead burned at the stake yesterday. The angry crowd wanted Polycarp to be fed to the wild beasts but the Roman Governor felt sorry for the gentle old man and urged him to proclaim, "Caesar is Lord". Polycarp only needed to say those few words and offer a small pinch of incense to Caesar's statue, and he would escape torture and death. But he refused, saying that he could not blaspheme his God.

In the end, the Governor decided to burn him instead. Polycarp refused to let them tie him

to the stake. He said Jesus would not only strengthen him to endure the flames but would also enable him to stand firm without being fastened. When the woodpile was lighted, he prayed that God had judged him worthy to share in Christ's sufferings together with all the others who had been martyred. As the flames engulfed him, believers said that it smelled more like bread baking than flesh burning. Bishop Polycarp was finished off with the stab of a dagger. The church is in mourning over the death of this great man of God.

#### Cool Quote

Eighty-six years I have served Christ, and He never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?

### Editor's note

Can you imagine what it is like to live to a ripe old age of 86 and then to have to die a violent death? That was the heart-wrenching experience of Polycarp, the last of those personally taught by John the Apostle. Made Bishop of Smyrna in Asia Minor in his thirties, he faithfully took care of his congregation till his martyrdom when he was 86 years old. When he was arrested, he went towards his death with calm and dignity, knowing that Christ would be with him.

### Bishop Polycarp had a great impact on me!

"Polycarp used to talk of his going about with Apostle John, and with the others who had seen the Lord, about their sayings... about the Lord, about his mighty acts and his teachings... And because Polycarp had received it from eye-witnesses of the Word of life, he used to tell everything just as it is in the Scriptures... I used to listen eagerly, noting these things, not on paper, but in my heart".

Bishop Ireneaus of Lugdunum